

Amendments to the Claims:

1 - 11. (Previously Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) An identity document comprising:

~~an identity a~~ document substrate and a protective coating secured to the ~~identity~~ document substrate, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/50 mm thick and has been deposited on the substrate out of the gas and/or plasma phase ~~wherein the protective coating is not secured to the identity document substrate by adhesive; and~~

~~the substrate is provided with information on the surface thereof and adhesion of the information with respect to the protective coating is greater than with respect to the substrate.~~

13. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating comprises metal oxides.

14. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the coating contains silanes and/or silazanes.

15. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating contains fluoride.

16. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least an outside surface of the protective coating has self-cleaning properties.

17. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least an outside surface of the protective coating has self-healing properties.

18. (Currently amended) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable after application to the ~~identity~~ document substrate.

19. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 18 wherein the refractive index is variable by the action of laser light.

20. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the substrate comprises a polycarbonate.

21. (Previously presented) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating can be penetrated by laser light to personalize the substrate without producing an optical variation in the protective coating.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently amended) An identity document, comprising:

~~an identity~~ a document substrate having a surface;
a protective coating disposed on the surface; the protective coating is at least partially transparent, and is less than 1/50 mm thick; and the document substrate includes an electronic chip, and the protective coating is disposed over the electronic chip, and is not secured to the surface by an adhesive layer.

24. (Previously presented) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/500 mm thick.

25. (Currently amended) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the ~~identity~~ document substrate comprises a plastic card or an identity card.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the protective coating comprises a ceramic material or a carbon material.

28. (Previously presented) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the surface includes individualization, and the individualization is covered by the protective coating.

29. (Previously presented) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable, and the protective coating includes at least one portion whose refractive index has been varied by laser radiation.

30. (Previously presented) The identity document of claim 29, where the protective coating includes a plurality of said portions, and at least some of the plurality of said portions vary in color.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) An identity document as set forth in claim 12 comprising a plurality of layers of the protective coating.

35. (New) The identity document of claim 23 comprising a plurality of layers of the protective coating.